

June 2003

Attendees and Area Announcements listed after minutes.

General Environmental Health Topics

2003 Promotion Update

Congratulations to all those who received their promotions. IHS fared well in comparison to the over all PHS promotion percentages. Out of three IHS EHOs eligible for promotion to T O-4, two received their promotions (67% for IHS EHOs compared to 91% for PHS EHOs); out of 11 IHS EHOs eligible for promotion to T O-5, six received their promotions (55% for IHS EHOs compared to 31% for PHS EHOs); and out of 15 IHS EHOs eligible for promotion to T O-6, three received their promotions (20% for IHS EHOs compared to 20% for PHS EHOs).

HQ Vacancy Announcements

The IHS-EMSC Coordinator position (Public Health Advisor, GS-0685-12/13) was announced May 27. This announcement closes June 27. The announcement number is IHS-03-25 and can be found on the DEHS and IHS websites. Interested individuals should contact Alan Dellapenna (301-443-0097) for more information.

The Injury Prevention Program Coordinator position (GS-0601-14) was announced June 2 and closes July 2. The announcement number is IHS-03-23 and can be found on the DEHS and IHS websites. Interested individuals should contact Kelly Taylor (301-443-1593) for more information.

GPRA Environmental Health Update

The general environmental health GPRA indicator has not been changed from FY 2004 to 2005. It remains as follows:

Indicator 33: During FY 2005, the IHS will increase the number of active tribal user accounts for the automated web-based environmental health reporting system by 15 percent over the FY 2004 level for American Indian and Alaska Native tribes not currently receiving direct environmental health services.

We will more than likely change this indicator as we make progress on identifying health status indicators for environmental health. The next change will refer to collecting health status indicator data in WebEHRS. Because we aren't quite there yet, Kelly doesn't want to change the indicator from something we can meet to something we may not meet.

Strategic Initiative Plans

Almost every action item was assigned a completion date. For those that weren't, we will assign them after the lead coordinators or over all coordinators discuss the issues with Kelly. Now it's time to begin work on addressing these items. Remember, each strategic initiative has an overall coordinator. The overall coordinators will make sure each of the action item leads are doing their jobs, lend assistance to the action item leaders, and generally facilitate the work being done. We'll have updates on progress during the next conference call scheduled for July 3.

Billet Guidance Document

Since the last call, Kelly received a copy of the email that went out from IHS commissioned personnel to all commissioned corps liaisons asking them to review a list of all IHS officers in billets lower than their temporary grades and tell them whether or not their billets needed to be changed. Kelly discussed with Personnel our billet guidance document and the need for assigning "correct" billets to each position. Personnel assured her that they will take DEHS recommendations into consideration since our division is so familiar with the billet issue. Kelly had asked all directors to apply the billet guidance document to their staff and report the results.

All Areas except Alaska sent their results to HQ. Kelly will review the proposed billet changes and send the final recommendations to Paul McSherry. So far, there are few changes to be made. Most of our EHOs are in the correct billet. From the list of officers in billets lower than their temporary grades, only three out of the ten will be recommended for change. Of those three, two should be higher and the other should be changed from an agency specific billet to a standard billet (same grade). There were a total of 18 billets out of 87 that should be changed one way or another. Those recommendations will be given to Personnel. Only two billets were found to be higher than the guidance document recommends.

Thanks go to all the division directors for the work they put into this effort.

FEDS Database Linkage Project Update

As discussed during the DEHS Directors meeting in San Antonio and the last conference call, Facilities has a database of environmental deficiencies that EHS has not traditionally accessed. Because EHS can take care of some of these deficiencies if they only know what's in there, we have come up with a process to link the FEDS database with WebEHRS. All directors were given instructions on how to associate health care facilities in WebEHRS to health care facilities in FEDS. Once Directors associate the appropriate facilities, they will then be given access to the deficiency descriptions for those facilities, and field staff will be able to see those deficiencies within their geographical locations and can refer those deficiencies to the appropriate authorities for remediation.

Aberdeen, Albuquerque, Portland, Tucson, and Oklahoma Areas have completed the linkages and notified Darren that they are done. There are questions on the other Areas, so those directors will need to contact Darren.

Facilities has reviewed Aberdeen's linkages and are working on the queries on their server now. We will be able to connect to Facilities' data system without having to install anything extra and will be able to report what state the reported deficiencies are in. These deficiencies were what were reported as a result of the facility condition surveys (formerly known as "deep look surveys). When Facilities is finished writing queries, we will be able to start testing them, starting with Aberdeen Area.

HQ COSTEP Data Project

Danielle Shirk has begun working on her summer project with Darren. She has been contacting Areas, tribes, states, educational facilities, etc., asking for geospatial data related to environmental health and American Indian and Alaska Native populations. We are trying to move forward with our GIS capabilities. Darren and Danielle have been invited to visit the DHHS Command Center to see what they are doing with GIS and emergency preparedness.

Many states have expressed interest in forming partnerships regarding tribal/state/federal GIS public health data bases.

Area Data Collection Projects

If you have a public health data collection project going on in your Area, and haven't notified Darren, please contact him. Danielle wrote a document of helpful hints and suggestions about GPS coordinate collection in WebEHRS. It would be beneficial to review this document before you get too far along.

Community Codes

The community codes in WebEHRS come from the National Patient Information Reporting System (NPIRS) data. This is what IHS uses for doing their population counts. There are some communities that don't show up in NPIRS data because NPIRS community codes are primarily communities with IHS facilities (health care facilities) in them. DEHS works in communities with other than IHS facilities, such as restaurants, bars, casinos, etc. We are currently working with the HQ Program Statistician to identify those communities and request codes. Environmental Health staff will be instrumental in this effort and will work through their Area Statisticians to request new communities be added. EHS is working with SFC and Program Statistics to develop a form to use when requesting new community codes. These new codes will be added to NPIRS data, which should help with the accuracy of population information.

We'll let you know when we get the form developed and what further actions are required of you or your staff. This will assist us in our SFC data consolidation effort, since they also work in communities not listed in NPIRS.

Injury Prevention Topics

Injury Prevention Cooperative Agreements

The 2003 Competitive Cooperative Agreement Application for the Injury Prevention Program has been approved for announcement. The application kit is being printed and will be mailed to tribal organizations. This announcement will not appear in the Federal Register, but will be a targeted mailing.

Under the announcement, approximately \$295,000 will be available to fund up to 8 new awards. There are two separate types of awards covered under this announcement:

Part I: Funds are available to fund up to 5 new awards for Basic Core Capacity Injury Prevention Program Development or Enhanced Injury Prevention Program Development. Individual awards can be up to \$50,000.

Part II: Funds are available to fund up to 3 awards to implement proven or promising injury intervention projects that are based on addressing local injury problems. Individual awards can be up to \$15,000.

The announcement period is June 1- July 15, 2003. An electronic copy of the announcement (without the appendices containing required forms and additional submission information) is posted on the Injury Prevention website (www.dehs.ihs.gov/noinjuries).

Applicants interested in reviewing the announcement and working on their proposal before they receive the complete, mailed copy of the application kit are encouraged to visit the web site and download a copy of the announcement. The announcement contains the injury prevention program information needed for an applicant to develop a proposal, but should be augmented with the mailed application kit.

Contact Alan Dellapenna (301-443-0097) for more information. This information should be shared with as many tribal programs/organizations as possible.

GPRA Injury Prevention Update

The FY 2005 Injury Prevention indicators have been changed from FY 2004. The proposed indicators are as follows;

Indicator 27: During FY 2005, implement at least 36 community-based, proven injury prevention intervention projects across I/T/U settings and develop a web-based data collection system to report projects.

Indicator 28: During FY 2005, develop a web-based injury surveillance program for use across I/T/U settings.

For more information on these changes, contact your Area Injury Prevention Specialist.

Vacancy Table

Please be sure to keep the Vacancy Table on the DEHS website current. The table is located at www.dehs.ihs.gov and can be edited through the DEHS Directors' WebEHRS accounts.

Participants and Area Announcements

Aberdeen: Dave Compton. Dave's last day is June 30, so this is his last conference call. John Weaver will be Acting DEHS Director until the position is backfilled. When John is not in the office, Curt Smelley will be Acting. The position description is being classified now and should be announced soon. The District Sanitarian position in Sioux City will be open the end of July following Gina Locklear's transfer to Phoenix Area.

Albuquerque: Fan Robinson, Mike Lewis. Albuquerque is anxiously awaiting the draft of the OEHE Consult report conducted May 5 – 9.

Anchorage: Mark Kelty. Alaska will have a big presence at NEHA next week. Tom Coolidge is working on the billet guidance. Alaska has several COSTEPs on board. The Kotzebue Environmental Health Specialist position is still open and the announcement can be found on the DEHS website. Any interested individuals should contact Jeff Smith (907-729-3502).

Bemidji: Casey Crump. The Minnesota District EHO position has been filled by Carolyn Garcia. The SU EHO in Rhinelander will be open soon.

Billings: John Sery. John is still waiting on word from Personnel about the Area IEHO position.

California: Paul Young. DHHS Secretary Tommy Thompson has decided the organizational future of DCP. Although the reorganization has not been officially announced, the shift in reporting responsibility is scheduled to be effective on 1 July 2003.

The DCP Office of the Director, Recruiting and Assignment Branch, and Officer Services Branch will be transferred to the Office of Public Health and Science reporting to the Assistant Secretary for Health. This entity will be renamed "Commissioned Corps Force Management".

The Compensation Branch and Medical Affairs Branch will remain under the Program Support Center and will be renamed the Commissioned Corps Services Group. This will probably be discussed during COA.

Nashville: Not on call.

Navajo: Ken Secord. The IEHO position in DOHSM has been filled by Brian Hroch. Donna Gilbert has been selected as the Many Farms SU Sanitarian. She will be transferring from Tuba City. Ken expects a panel for Shiprock SU Sanitarian position soon. There will be a Field Sanitarian position in Kayenta announced soon, following Thomas Young's transfer to Phoenix.

Oklahoma: Kevin Meeks. No announcements.

Phoenix: Mike Welch. Gina Locklear was chosen as the Reno District Sanitarian. She reports to duty around the first of August. Thomas Young was selected as the EHO in Fort Duchesne and will report to duty around the first of August as well. Dave Kramer has left Phoenix Area to participate in the IHS IEH Residency Program. Both COSTEPs are on duty (one is in Whiteriver and the other is at the Area office). Holly Billie received a scholarship from Johns Hopkins Center for American Indian Health to attend the Hopkins graduate summer session program. There is no longer "casual Friday" in the DEHS office.

Portland: Al Knapp. No announcements.

Tucson: Mark Pike. No announcements.

Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Darren Buchanan. Kelly's and Darren's announcements were covered in the General Environmental Health and Injury Prevention sections.

Next Call

The next conference call is scheduled for July 3, 2003, at 12:00 PM Eastern Time. If you can not be on the call personally, provide an alternate who can fully participate in the discussions.

Conference call numbers are the same for each call:

Dial in Number: **1-888-457-9037** (for all calls)

*Pass Code: **72889** (for all calls)